

Mays Landing Presbyterian Church
Mays Landing, Atlantic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-516

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

Mays Landing Presbyterian Church
Mays Landing, Atlantic County, New Jersey

Owner: Trustees of Mays Landing Presbyterian Church

Date of Erection: 1841

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Excellent

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Foundation - brick

Exterior walls - brick with
portico on south elevation

Interior walls - plaster,
both auditorium and basement,
wainscoting sill high in
auditorium

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

For many years it was claimed that George May founded the settlement bearing the name Mays Landing in 1710; a search of the Archives, however, reveals that that would have been impossible and it is more likely that the date was 1760. He had a store there to supply vessels putting into Great Egg Harbor.

Hall states that in 1812 Colonel Richard Westcott, Sr. gave to seven trustees, partly Baptists and partly Methodists, a piece of ground whereon stood a meeting house to be used by all denominations. The church was used by Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Quakers. Heston says that there was a free church at Mays Landing in 1782 and that it subsequently passed to the Baptists; these are apparently the same items since both writers say that the free church was torn down when the Methodists built their own church; this was about 1840. Colonel Richard Westcott served in the Revolutionary Army and was badly wounded at Trenton. Later he had charge of the government stores at The Forks which was near the headwaters of the Mullica River in Atlantic County. He settled at Mays Landing after the war and from 1783 to 1825, the year of his death, he kept a hotel there; he also had a store and mill.

The Presbyterians were at Mays Landing at an early date for Reverend John Brainerd who rode a circuit in South Jersey preached in this section. In October 1840 definite steps were taken to have regular Presbyterian services in Mays Landing and a committee of ministers visited the place. The result was that the Reverend S. F. Colt arrived in February 1841. The lot upon which the church stands was given to the trustees by Samuel Richards and the cornerstone of the present building was laid in April 1841.

From 1830 to 1870 Mays Landing was a very prosperous community; with the closing of the iron furnaces and the abandonment of ship building the village declined importance.

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Walter E. Rutt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

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